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President Samia Suluhu Hassan
President's Office
Utumishi street, P.O. BOX 670
Dodoma
Tanzania

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Dear President Hassan,

**I am writing to express grave concern about the arrest and arbitrary detention of Tundu Lissu, the Chairperson of Chadema, the main opposition party in Tanzania.**

Tundu Lissu was arrested on 9 April after holding a political rally in Mbinga town, southwest of Tanzania. He was then transferred to Dar es Salaam, more than 1’000 kilometres away by road during the night. Police used excessive force, including by firing teargas and shooting in the air to disperse his supporters who gathered around during the arrest. On 10 April, he was charged with a capital and non-bailable offence of treason alongside two other offences under the country’s cybercrime laws in relation to his social media posts calling for Tanzanians to boycott the forthcoming elections, citing the possibility of rigging. The charge of treason, under sections 39 and 40 of the Tanzanian Penal Code is non-bailable offence which carries the mandatory death penalty Tanzania retains the death penalty in law but has not executed since 1994.

On the morning of 24 April, police beat up and arrested dozens of people who tried to access Kisutu Resident Magistrate's Court in Dar es Salaam where Tundu Lissu’s case came for hearing. Chadema’s deputy chairperson John Heche and secretary general John Mnyika were among those arrested but were released later that night. Chadema’s deputy secretary general further reported that police injured and killed one person in front of the court that morning. 23 people were beaten by police outside the court. Many had suffered cuts and bruises on various parts of their bodies including head, hands legs, back and shoulders. A woman and a man reported to Amnesty International that they had been sexually assaulted by the police.

Amnesty International has reported intensification of authoritarian practices and a vicious clampdown on dissent in recent years in Tanzania as the country heads to presidential and parliamentary elections due to take place in October 2025.

**I urge your government to immediately and unconditionally release Tundu Lissu as he is detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his human rights. I also urge you to end all arbitrary arrests and the growing crackdown on opposition leaders ahead of the October 2025 general elections. I further urge you to refrain from all attacks on opposition party members, real or perceived government critics, human rights defenders and journalists and end all harassment and targeting of their important and legitimate work.**

Yours sincerely,

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**Copie**

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